

Spring 2021

ENG 352-454: Technical Writing

Vanessa Velez

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English 352: Technical Writing

Professor: Vanessa Velez
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Term: Spring 2021
Office: Cullimore 431 (remote)
Office Hours: Scheduled by appointment

Course Format and Objectives

Catalog Description: An advanced writing course combining theory with practice to prepare students as technical writers. Analyze complex communication situations and design appropriate responses through tasks that involve problem solving, rhetorical theory, grammatical accuracy, document design, writing teams, audience awareness, ethical considerations, and gender equity issues.

Course Description: In this section of English 352, you will learn to create, adapt and revise technical documents for both expert and non-expert audiences. Since many of you have different professional goals and interests, this course will focus on rhetorical awareness rather than addressing every convention and genre that you might encounter in your professional lives. This means that we will spend much of our time investigating the social context surrounding pieces of writing, and consider how authors use deliberate rhetorical strategies to communicate meaning within these texts. The course will also focus on the writing process, asking you to brainstorm topics, write drafts, and revise based on instructor or peer feedback. Keep this in mind, because we don't have a lot of time to cover this material.

Course Goals: Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

- Recognize and analyze the rhetorical dimensions in written documents by producing written and critical responses to course readings.
- Use writing as a tool for critical thinking, reflection and communication.
- Understand writing choices and how to make ethical writing decisions.
- Practice the writing process by using brainstorming, invention, and revision strategies.
- Construct clear, grammatical sentences and produce well-organized texts that exhibit an attention to audience, genre, and purpose.
- Learn how to apply basic principles of document design to clarify writing.
- Find, select, assess, and analyze information sources, both print and electronic, and to credit, integrate and synthesize these sources in your own work.

Required Texts: *The Essentials of Technical Communication, Fourth Edition* by Elizabeth Tebeaux and Sam Dragga

Participation: Your participation grade reflects your overall performance in the course. Students with strong participation will ultimately 1) engage with all the readings; 2) ask useful questions if assistance is required; 3) check course at least once a day and participate in discussions and exercises; 4) submit assignments on time; 5) schedule conferences with me for guidance long before an assignment is due; 6) contribute in discussions and classwork.

Students with low participation might 1) ignore the readings; 2) submit work not corresponding with this class; 3) check course less than once a day; 4) miss deadlines; 5) not participate in discussions; 6) miss assignment and expect extensions.

Your classwork and homework assignments are designed to prepare you for the course's major assignments. Remember that quizzes, discussions, and class participation combine for 15% of your final grade, so do not ignore the importance of this work. Each assignment will be graded according to the following scale:

Discussions:

Satisfactory: This work is thoughtful, reasonably complete given time allowed, and it was turned in on time (full credit, usually 10/10 points).

Marginal: This work was turned in on time, but it is completed in a careless manner or is substantially incomplete given time allowed (half credit, usually 5.5/10 points).

Unacceptable: This work ignores written/verbal instructions and/or missed its deadline (no credit, usually 0/10 points).

Please be aware that these assignments and your participation in discussion forums will combine to make up 25% of your final grade.

Quizzes

There are 20 quizzes, each worth 10 points. These quizzes are multiple choice and short answer. They require the 4th edition of the text book for you to fully understand the questions.

Formal Projects:

You will have three formal projects. These assignments will be evaluated according to project rubrics, which will also be posted on Canvas, and will be given a letter grade. Full details on these projects will be uploaded to Canvas within the next week.

Grade Breakdown: Each assignment will be evaluated on criteria that are specific to the genre you are producing. You will find these criteria with the appropriate assignment sheet.

A = 100-90	B+ = 89-87	B = 86-80	C+ = 79-77	C = 76-70	D = 69-60	F = 59-0
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A/A- Superior. Your deliverable is professional and exceeds expectations. It meets (and exceeds) all of the grading criteria for the assignment. You demonstrate excellence in audience awareness, organization, and document design. I would use your work as an example for future classes, and I recommend you use it in your professional portfolio.

B+/B Proficient. Your deliverable is professional in writing and design, and it meets all of the grading criteria for the assignment. The difference between an A and a B is your attention to detail and/or the sophistication of your writing or design.

C+/C Average. Your deliverable meets the basic criteria for the assignment but does no more. It may be reasonably organized, have a few grammar or usage errors, but it needs another revision to improve usability and/or audience awareness.

D+/D Deficient. Your deliverable needs significant revision of rhetorical approach, content development, writing, and/or document design/visuals.

F- Unacceptable. Your deliverable fails to accomplish its designated task, adapt to its audience, or develop key ideas.

Writing Assignments (75%)

You will have three major assignments—Website Analysis, Instruction Set Project and Recommendation Report—which will make up the majority of your grade.

Quizzes (15%) Your in-class and homework assignments prepare you for major also develop your writing and critical thinking abilities. You will receive more information about these assignments in class, and you cannot make up any in-class or homework assignment you miss when absent or late to class.

Participation (10%) Participation credit includes your active, ongoing participation in class discussions, asking pertinent or clarifying questions, etc. It is very difficult to do well in the rest of the course without participating extensively.

Course Etiquette:

- Participate in class in a timely manner.
- Please address your professor in a mature and professional manner.
- Since communication in this course is in text-form, accurate grammar, MLA-style quotes and citations, and academic language are necessary in all correspondence and assignments to achieve top marks. Your textbook covers these practices in its appendix on page 334. Please reference this area frequently, as self-learning is vital when participating in an online class.
- Sign up for all course notifications to be aware of any changes or updates.
- All assignments must be original. **Plagiarism is not tolerated in any form.** Please reference NJIT's Academic Integrity Code to familiarize yourself with these rules.
- Respect your peers. You're entitled to your opinions, and it's fine to disagree. Be polite about it. You're reviewing peers' writing, not their opinions. Ad hominem, bigotry, etc. are not opinions.

Please Note: I do not give extra credit, particularly for those who have failed to fulfill the participation aspect of this course. Writing courses are designed to be process-oriented, which makes regular participation essential to academic growth.

NJIT University Code on Academic Integrity: The New Jersey Institute of Technology is an institution dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge through teaching and research. We expect our graduates to assume positions of leadership within their professions and communities. Honesty in your academic work will develop into professional integrity.

The NJIT Code of Academic Integrity embodies a spirit of mutual trust and intellectual honesty that is central to the very nature of the university and represents the highest possible expression of shared values among the members of the university community.

All assignments submitted shall be considered "graded work" and all aspects of your coursework are covered by the Code on Academic Integrity. All projects and homework assignments are to be completed individually unless otherwise specified. The full text of the NJIT University Code on Academic Integrity can be found at www.njit.edu/education/pdf/academic-integrity-code-pdf.

Special Needs: Every attempt will be made to accommodate qualified students with disabilities. If you are a student with a documented disability, please see me as early in the semester as possible to discuss the necessary accommodations, and/or contact Student Disability Services at 973-596-3420.

Canvas:

Access to all assignments, some readings, and class forums will be provided via the course Canvas site, located at <http://canvas.njit.edu>. Log into Canvas regularly to make sure you stay up to date with our class. If you get locked out of Canvas, contact the Help Desk at 973-596-2900 or try to reset your password at:

https://mypassword.njit.edu/cgi-bin/upr/passchange_default.php.

Course Schedule

Readings and writing assignments will be posted to Moodle.